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27 Essential Methods of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



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When CPTED was first conceived, it was based on guesses of what might work. For example, Jane Jacob's idea that 'eyes on the street' might reduce crime was her personal opinion and not based on any direct measurement of its effectiveness.

As other CPTED ideas were developed, they followed the same path. Historically, CPTED principles were based on 'what seemed right' rather than evidence. Examples include: lighting, 'broken windows' theory, use of CCTV, natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, activity support and defensible space.

Evidence and CPTED

Recent **evidence** from criminological research has demonstrated:

1. CPTED *can* be HIGHLY EFFECTIVE and cost-effective at significantly reducing crime.
2. CPTED can *also* easily INCREASE CRIME and result in many ADVERSE EFFECTS.
3. Many key assumptions of CPTED are WRONG - or, rather, they are over-simplistic.

Much of the relevant research into the adverse effects of CPTED and challenges to taken-for-granted oversimplistic assumptions of CPTED have been identified and reported by Dr Paul Cozens (long-time colleague, friend and Associate Director of the Design Out Crime and CPTED Centre). Paul refers to these issues as the 'Dark Side' of CPTED and documents them well in his classic CPTED textbook 'Think Crime!' (see below*).

In other articles, myself and Paul have drawn attention to the range of ways that CPTED can increase crime and cause a range of adverse outcomes. In reality, any carelessly or inappropriately applied CPTED interventions have this potential to create problems, and increase crime rather than reduce it - and many do.

Additionally, is the evidence now indicates that many 'taken for granted' CPTED assumptions are false or mistaken. This has been particularly identified as a problem in New Urbanism planning thanks again to Paul Cozens. For example, evidence indicates that permeable and walkable street networks increase crime. This appears to be because they increase the ease of escape (more criminal escape routes). The increase in crime occurs even though such walkable streets in naive CPTED terms have the apparent potential for higher levels of natural surveillance. There are also problems with many other CPTED assumptions about lighting, use of CCTV, natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, activity support and defensible space automatically reducing crime. They can do so - sometimes - but only in specific circumstances, when accurately targeted to a specific situation. Each of these can also increase crime or cause a range of other problems.

The challenge is of having enough information to be able to finely tailor the details of CPTED interventions so as to maximise their positive crime reducing effects whilst minimising their potential to increase crime or cause adverse effects.

Evidence from criminology research indicates successful CPTED interventions occur from carefully tailoring them to the specific circumstances.

The importance of accurately targeting CPTED interventions

The evidence indicates that accurately targeting CPTED interventions is essential to ensuring successful outcomes.

*Accurate targeting of CPTED interventions **maximises** the crime reduction effect of the available resources, and **minimises** the potential for incidental adverse effects from CPTED.*

By implication cookie-cutter CPTED (CPTED done unthinkingly out of a guidebook without regard to the details of the context) is more likely to accidentally increase crime, have adverse consequences and be less effective.

How to accurately target CPTED interventions?

Accurately targeting CPTED interventions requires **more information** about the situations being addressed.

Accurately targeting CPTED demands a better understanding of the situation and the site, which implies gathering more data about it.

It also necessitates a better CPTED process than the traditional CPTED method of looking at the physical detail of a site and attempting to match it to a standard set of CPTED architectural details.

In short, **evidence** and **increased levels of information** are needed to accurately target CPTED interventions.

Below are 25 Key Methods for CPTED that we have found useful for accurately targeting CPTED interventions.

27 Key Methods for Successful CPTED

THIS LIST OF 27 KEY CPTED METHODS BELOW ARE THOSE WE HAVE FOUND TO BE ESSENTIAL TO THE CREATION OF ACCURATELY TARGETED CPTED INTERVENTIONS.

This approach has been created and developed by the [Design Out Crime and CPTED Centre](#) on the basis of many years of experience and research.

The order of the list below is also suggested in the best order for undertaking a CPTED process and for creating the documentation required for designing CPTED interventions and/or for undertaking CPTED reviews of proposed developments.

The list of 27 essential CPTED methods:

1. Create a project and its documentation/filing.
2. Define problem definition and set boundaries.
3. Review and assess threat analysis.
4. Crime risk statistics analysis (police incident reports, victimisation analyses etc. including time).
5. Prior/repeat/near victimization analyses (time, location, target, target type...)
6. Demographic and socio-economic analysis and mapping (profile.id).
7. Routine activity analysis.
8. Crime opportunity analysis.
9. Geographical juxtaposition analysis.
10. Land-use analysis.
11. Natural surveillance mapping (Plan and elevation).
12. Territorial reinforcement mapping.
13. Lurk-line identification and mapping (2D and 3 D).
14. Entrapment identification and mapping.
15. Natural access control mapping.
16. Activity support analysis (24/7 across year).
17. Illumination analysis.
18. 3Ds analysis.
19. Image and maintenance analysis.
20. Fear of Crime mapping.
21. Choose appropriate methods of reducing Fear of Crime.
22. Inter-agency role/collaboration analysis.
23. Mapping relevant CPTED potential interventions.

24. Identifying adverse consequences of interventions.
25. Redesign and recheck for adverse effects.
26. Make plan for evaluating the success of the CPTED intervention(s).
27. Document all the above including the names and contact details of the organisations involved, a map of responsibilities and commitments, the sources of funding and a list of relevant contact persons and their contact details.

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We use these methods in greater detail than is expressed in the above 'headline' method titles: for designing CPTED interventions, for CPTED review of proposed developments, and in our CPTED training programs.

Confirming our approach, a project manager of large-scale international developments for Lendlease comments that our CPTED development and planning reviews are among the best he has seen.

More information

If you would like to:

- Know more about our CPTED approach.
- Have training in CPTED.
- Have us undertake CPTED reviews for planning or development.

Contact me:

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Go to www.designoutcrime.org for more details, to sign up for DOC-Gram our free CPTED newsletter, and to gain access to our large collection of CPTED resources.

Go to our online training and certification portal at <https://www.cybercpted.org> for certificated online courses in CPTED

* **P. Cozens** (2017). *Think Crime!*. Quinns Rocks: Praxis Education. Available: <https://www.praxiseducation.com/index.php/product/16-cpted-thinkcrime>